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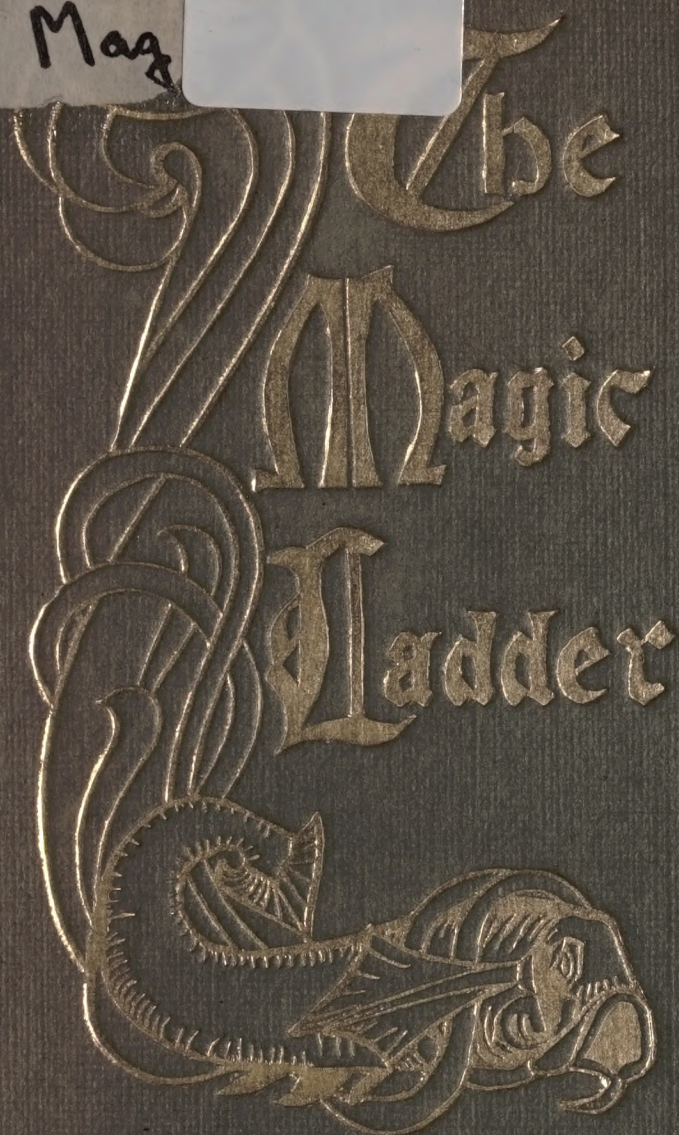
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The Magic Ladder



In a castle on a high peninsula lived the Princess with cats' ears.

—Page 58

The Magic Ladder

and Other Stories

By

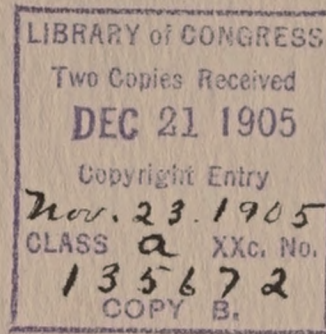
The Pupils of Washington Seminary

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To
Our Principals
Miss MacDonald
and
Miss Thompson

The Magic Radder



LONG time ago in the province of Lorraine dwelt Rupert, a good king, the beloved ruler of his people, and the loving father of a beautiful little princess.

Now when this child was but six years old she was stolen by brigands and carried to the mountains, where she was hidden securely from the king's scouts. During these years the king never slept, never talked, and never moved; he was constantly thinking of his child, always striving and planning for her recovery. His hair grew white, and his brain grew dull except to this one subject. Then a strange fancy took hold of him,--that the fairies would not leave the beautiful golden-haired child in his keeping because the palace was too dull and gloomy to be a fit home for her. So he made light the

rooms that were dark, and caused joy to displace sadness, by giving generous gifts to his subjects, and commanded that every face be happy at his approach.

But the king's face was unhappy and no smile lightened his brow; for still the princess was not found.

Ten years had passed since her disappearance when the king called a great meeting of his people, and with threats and promises urged them to help him gild the dome of his palace. In a dream he had seen it shining like gold and as, filled with awe, he drew nearer, he had seen his daughter's golden hair gleaming in the sunlight as she rode toward him on a wild horse from the mountains. Was not this an omen of her return?

Then the people were afraid, for they knew it was impossible to scale the tower and reach the dome of the palace. But the king still entreated, and at last promised the hand of the maiden, when she should return, to the man who could accomplish this feat. Many knights tried and failed, and many brave men lost their lives in the perilous ascent; but still the dome remained untouched.

Now in the mountains dwelt a youth who had many dear companions among the fairies. They had given him a ladder small enough to be carried in his hand, yet one which, when he mounted it, would reach to the clouds.

One day the youth heard through the fairies of the king's distress. "I do not want to marry the lost princess," said the youth, for I love my golden-haired maid of the mountains; but I will gild the dome of the king's palace."

Telling his love of his errand, he bade her good-bye and started on his journey. When he reached the palace and mounted his small ladder, great was the amazement of the people. But greater still was their wonder when the ladder shot up to the dome and the youth began his work. On the afternoon of the third day he descended, leaving the dome glittering in the sunlight.

The people stood in awed silence, watching the marvellous spectacle. Then, as the king moved toward the youth, a thrill ran through the crowd. King and youth turned, and there in the same bright sunlight galloped a horse, bearing on his

back a golden-haired maiden of great beauty.

“My love! my love!” breathed the youth, as she stopped beside him.

“My child! my lost child!” cried the gray-haired king.

Fessie Lambie.



A Nap in the Woods



GOODNESS!" exclaimed Gertrude, "I never heard such loud thunder."

"Oh, that wasn't thunder," said a bright little sprite, coming out from behind a tree near her. "That was the signal for Queen Merrybell's staff to meet. They always meet in this part of the realm on the Queen's birthday to make laws."

"Oh, are you a fairy? What is your name? and may I stay while you are all here? I have always wanted to see fairies," cried Gertrude in great excitement.

"Yes, you may stay, but be very careful not to knock down any of the seats for the staff officers," said Fernleaf, after telling her his name.

"Where are the seats?" inquired Gertrude. But while she was asking, she caught sight of a hundred lovely little

toad-stools which ten little boys were covering with soft, thick green moss. "How beautiful!" she cried.

Just then she heard the softest tinkle, tinkle of bells, and turned in time to see the mounted staff of fairy officers ride in with their queen at the head on a pretty white pony. Now the music began in earnest, while the officers sang in fine harmony about the excellent rule of Queen Merrybell, and how they wished her numberless happy birthdays, ending each stanza with the refrain:

"Queen Merrybell, Queen Merrybell,
The best of rulers she.
Come, fairies, of her praises tell
In joyous melody."

In a short time each officer was in his place, and after the queen and her four guards had reached their special seats, every little hat was doffed, and every right knee touched the ground.

"What are they going to do now?" whispered Gertrude to Fernleaf. But Fernleaf didn't have time to answer before big raindrops began to fall. Quick as a wink the guards had a leaf canopy over Queen Merrybell, and were leading her to a

hollow place in a tree trunk near Gertrude.

When the Queen was safe, Fernleaf came running back to Gertrude, begging her to seek shelter. But she was too large to enter any of the fairy retreats, so she was obliged to stand out in the rain. Fernleaf was much concerned about her, and ran back to the Queen to tell her all about the little girl who was getting so wet. And as Fernleaf was a special favorite with the Queen, she commanded fifty men to put on their raincoats, and go with him to see what could be done.

When Fernleaf saw that Gertrude had lain down on the sheltered side of an oak tree whose leaves were nearly all on the ground, the idea came to him to cover her with leaves, and thus protect her from the raindrops. He and his men worked hard and fast and soon had her well covered. They took care also to pile the leaves high on something red which Gertrude had put beside her.

“Oh, thank you all many times! I am sure I shall not get wet now. And please take this pearl to Queen Merrybell, with my respectful thanks. And here is one

for you, Fernleaf. I think I could go to sleep now,--I feel so comfortable."

But Gertrude didn't go to sleep. Instead, she woke up.

"Why, where are you, Fernleaf?" she said, a little dazed. But Fernleaf and the staff officers were gone.

Wide awake again, she saw that she was almost covered with leaves and that her dress and hair were a little damp. Hunting around for her Red Fairy Book, she found it dry as could be under the leaves beside her. But where was her pearl necklace? At last it was found too; but the string was broken and two pearls were missing. And Gertrude believes still that the fairies helped the wind to cover her up with leaves, and that she gave the two pearls to Queen Merrybell and Fernleaf.

Elizabeth C. Gist.

In the Kingdom of Nidaros



AR across the sea is the beautiful kingdom of Nidaros, where everyone is so happy that years come and go like so many golden hours. No one is ever ill in Nidaros, for sickness of mind or body is unknown, and the people work so diligently that the wolf never knocks at their doors, or even so much as draws near. Thus they live year by year in peace and happiness.

But it was not always so. Many years ago a little prince was born in this wonderful kingdom, and he was such a dear little prince, with such curly hair and such lovely blue eyes, that everyone loved him. When his nurse took him out to play in the sand on the sea shore, the children would stop their games, and now and then a loyal little subject would bring a tribute of flowers.

Now at the court of Nidaros there was a little lad whose father was a shepherd. This little fellow, whom the courtiers called Elsinor, was the inseparable companion of the young prince. The difference in their rank was apparently of no consequence; their friendship was that of a David and Jonathan. Every evening when the moon was bright, the two friends would go down to the shore, and there beside the beautiful sea they would listen to the tales their nurse told them of lands far beyond the water. The glimmering waves, too, spoke wonderful things to the heart of the little prince. Then he would wish that he could learn more of this strange sea-language. But when he spoke of his wish, the nurse only laughed at his fancies.

Thus the little prince grew, always loving the sea more and more. Every day its language became more plain to him, till one evening as he sat alone, having left Elsinor and the nurse at some distance, the voice of the sea came to him with an irresistible power. It seemed to call him, and he fancied that every wave was an outstretched arm, beckoning.

"But I cannot leave the Queen, my mother," he thought. "And Elsinor,--what would he do without me?"

"Come, come, come," sang the waves, and the arms beckoned persuasively. The little prince still resisted, but the wistful voice became more appealing till at last he yielded.

The sea had won its own.

The kingdom of Nidaros was plunged into mourning; little children at their play missed their young sovereign, and fathers and mothers were sad because of their king's sorrow. But all was as nothing compared to the silent grief of the little Elsinor. Sadly he walked by the sea. Wearily he thought of the palace he had left, of the little vacant room of the prince and of the wretched king and queen.

Then a wonderful thing happened! Out of the sea came a voice,--earnestly he listened as it spoke. Yes, he would do it,--for the sake of the lonely queen he would do it.

"But will not the Prince be unhappy and ever long for the realms he has left?"

"No," came the answer from the waves, with the promise that the prince should be

restored and that the sea-longing should never more possess him. Only there was a condition--Elsinor must take his place. Would he?--Could he?--

Again the sea triumphed.

Now the kingdom of Nidaros is joyful as before, and all day long the people work and the children play with never a thought of woe. The young prince walks proudly beside his noble sire, and the Queen mother is filled with happiness. Everything is as beautiful as in the prince's childhood,--but the little Elsinor is gone.

Sarah McDonald.

Just a Bird



ABOUT five years ago, I, a little bird of ordinary appearance, was hatched in a blossoming apple-tree. My parents took unusual care of me and I know now that, although they never told me so, they loved me dearly. For two years I enjoyed the love of such a home. When, however, I began to go into society, I met some friends who gave me such wonderful ideas of the outside world that, growing dissatisfied in the place where love reigned, I left home. Often have I thought of that departure, and vividly do I remember my father's and mother's last farewell. More than once since I have had a chance to say, "There is no place like home."

When I left my home, I set my wings in a southward-bound direction, and as my feathered sails were not used to labo-

rious exercise, I was frequently obliged to stop at some neighboring town. Of course I must confess that my throat would often fill with something I could not swallow, and habitually tears came to my eyes as the shadows of evening drew near,--the time when my father always sang us a sunset song. One advantage, however, of these many stops on my way to that land of flowers,--Florida,--was that they gave me an opportunity to meet all species of birds.

Oh the strange feeling I experienced when I flew into the "land of promise," as I thought it then! Imagine a bird of my age in a town where I knew no one, and no one knew me. It was a peculiar sensation. But I have found out that God cares for everyone, even if he is just a bird.

It did seem as if my journey had been heralded, because only a few hours after my arrival I met Mr. Robin, who was the image of myself. We conversed in our language and he asked me to his home to spend the evening. How his cozy nest reminded me of the flowery bower that I had left in the far North! I stayed with

this new acquaintance for a year, and then a wonderful change came into my life. I fell in love with his daughter.

My friends in this sunny land thought I had a beautiful voice and by their request I had given a number of private recitals. But the reason why my songs were felt so much more at this time was because I was in love. My songs, like those of a poet, were sung in a way that can be rendered only once in a life-time, when a youth of my age experiences what people call "Love." It is a feeling that can be expressed only in one's work.

A year after I left home I was a mated bird. My bride and I for a year were as happy as two butterflies; but just as surely as darkness follows sunshine, so some days in a married life must be dark and dreary. These days came to me when my dear little bride was killed. She was so pretty!--One day a boy thought so too and killed her with a cruel stone.

My friends and even my cozy nest did not seem the same after she was gone, and with broken health and heart I turned my face towards my home among the apple-blossoms. Mother and Father had heard

very little of me since I left, but all my early faults were forgotten when I fluttered into their tree one spring evening. You should have seen my reception. It was royal! My dear friends, never think you can do better away from home, but heed one who has traveled over hill and vale. Be satisfied with what you have, even if you are just a bird.

Bessie Farley.



My Visit to a Strange Land



I HAD been riding for three days beneath the broiling sun on the desert in the southern part of Arizona, and consequently I have never been able to decide whether what I am about to relate was hallucination or reality.

As, about three o'clock one afternoon, I mounted to the top of a small hill, my eye fell upon a fertile valley, through the midst of which flowed a river, sparkling in the rays of a bright sun. Upon the banks of this river was situated a town of extraordinary appearance. From where I sat on my horse, the houses looked as if they had been dropped from the skies, and then left just where they lit. There was no regularity in the plan of the town: the streets were crooked, and the houses were built in the most grotesque styles imaginable. For instance, one I passed later was

built on a slant, with a roof cut down to the first floor in the shape of a V. There were numerous doors, in which I saw a great number of keyholes of large size. In the front of this odd domicile there were no windows. On the street was a large gate with a winding pathway leading to the house.

I descended the hill and entered a street which led toward the centre of the town. The street zigzagged back and forth so that I could not see more than thirty feet of it at a time, and at every turn was a group of five or six lamp-posts. But the strangest feature of all to me was that every person I met staggered to and fro on the crooked pavements as if he were intoxicated.

I rode on in amazement until I came to a building, which, from its size I supposed to be a public building--possibly the court house. In front of the building stood a fountain. I allowed my horse to drink, and dismounted to quench my own thirst, which had become severe. Several men and women were drinking from the fountain, while others were walking unsteadily along the street. I satisfied myself with

copious draughts of the sparkling liquid, which I thought must be a peculiar kind of mineral water, for it had a taste foreign to my palate.

Soon, however, my head began to whirl and a sudden dizziness came over me. I glanced at the horse and saw that he was swaying back and forth upon his feet. Filled with wonder, I asked a man who was leaning against a post near by, what kind of water this was which flowed from the fountain.

"Water!" he cried. "That is not water,--it is alcohol."

"Where does it come from?" I asked in bewilderment.

"From the town reservoir, which is supplied from the river," was the answer.

With this response, a light broke slowly over my confused mind. I now saw an explanation for the zigzag streets, for the numerous lamp-posts grouped at the corners, and for the haphazard architecture of the buildings. The inhabitants of this absurd town used alcohol as we of the rest of the world used water. Thus they were always in the state which we call intoxication, yet which was for them the natural

state. It was marvellous! I could scarcely have believed it had not my own condition been proof of the fact.

Presently I saw a man, who was different from anyone I had yet observed. He was walking with head erect, and with a firm and unfaltering step very different from the reeling gait of those whom he passed.

"Poor fellow," said the man who had informed me about the liquid in the fountain, "Poor fellow, it's a pity he can't leave water alone."

"What!" I exclaimed, unable to believe that I had heard him aright.

"Yes," he continued, "water is the curse of this town. There are more young men ruined through it in one year, than are killed in our factories in three."

I was so surprised at this statement, and my mind was so confused with the strange things I had seen and heard since I entered this fantastic town, that I felt I must get away and be alone to think the experience over. With the assistance of several bystanders, I mounted my horse and we reeled away down the winding street.

When I came to and looked around me, I found that my horse had stopped and was gazing off over the vacant desert. Dusk was just falling. I rubbed my eyes and searched the landscape in every direction. The sand stretched away in a level plane to the horizon, but besides myself and the horse not a living plant or animal was to be seen. And to this day it remains a mystery to my mind, whether I had suffered from sunstroke, had fallen asleep in my saddle and dreamed, or whether I had in reality visited this strange town.

Carolene H. Harding.

The Will and the Way



ANY years ago, when witches lived and mysteries were abundant, a poor young man started out in search of his fortune.

After wandering around for a few days without ever having found a place to sleep over night, except on some moss-covered bank or bed of leaves, he met an old man who asked him whither he was journeying. The young man told him of his troubles, and in return was laughingly told to try for the hand of the princess. "For," said his informant, "the King has offered his daughter's hand to the man who will free her from the terrible witch who has enslaved her. But if the man fails, he will be put into prison for life as punishment."

With a lighter heart, but still with some foreboding, Paul went to the king and boldly stated his errand. The king con-

sented to his undertaking the search and Paul set out in high spirits. But at first the search seemed unavailing, and it was not till after he had been seeking all day for the mysterious witch on a large thickly-wooded mountain, that Paul came suddenly upon an old woman sitting in the front of her small house, peeling potatoes.

“Good-day, my good dame,” he said. “Would you listen to a poor journeyman who has travelled far and wide in search of his fortune?”

“Can’t you see that I am busy, sir, getting my supper? And if I have it not ready by twilight, I shall no longer be this old dame. I pray you, sir, do not hinder me.”

“But may I not remain here over night?--for I am so weak and spent from my day’s travels that I can go no further.” Persuading the old woman was not an easy task, but she finally consented and led Paul into the house.

At supper-time, no one came; only the old woman and Paul sat down, and he could not help wondering why it was so necessary for her to be on time with this meal. At the table, he suddenly startled

her by requesting to see the lost princess. The old woman cast him a sharp look, but, thinking it would be impossible for him to free the maiden, she promised him a visit to the underground passages after supper, if he would tell no one.

When they had finished eating, therefore, she opened a trap-door in the floor and led him down a pair of steep stairs into a long and narrow hallway. Dim lights were all that made it visible to the eye. Indented along the wall were different strange devices,--magic boxes filled with little red imps; magic wands; and fountains such as would send streams of water to any part of the earth at the touch of a magic wand. The old witch explained each one to him as they walked through this ghostlike place.

At last, when they had walked far and everything had become dark, the witch opened a door leading into a brilliantly illuminated room. Here all--chairs, tables and couches,--was covered with gold and silver; and in the centre of the room on a gleaming throne was seated a beautiful maiden. As soon as Paul saw her, he loved her, and determined to set her free. But how could he do it? The witch had

refused to reveal the secret of enchantment to him; yet he could not return to the King without the maiden. He refused therefore to leave the place. The threats of the witch were all of no avail against his determination, and she finally consented that he should sleep in a room near by, which she had never entered and where she thought the evil ones stayed. Leaving him as she imagined, to his death, she returned to earth.

Meanwhile Paul, with no thought of evil spirits, went into the dark room to spend the night. He groped his way around in the dark but found nothing to lie on save damp earth. As he slept, he had what seemed to him a dream, in which appeared small black dwarfs, armed with dimmed lanterns. They told him the secret and gave him a large key with which to unlock the doors of enchantment.

The next morning when he awoke, he saw a beam of light shining into the room, and reflected on the key. He picked the key up,--when the beam immediately changed to a large keyhole. He pushed the key in with a firm grasp, and behold!--there before his eyes was the beautiful

maiden. He seized her by the hand--and then everything grew dark. In the flash of a moment they found themselves back to earth again; the witch had disappeared, and the enchantment was forever broken.

Paul and the princess went before the king and related the tale to him. And the king gave Paul his daughter's hand, as he had promised, and besides this, enough gold and silver to keep them all the days of their lives.

Cornelia Wales.



A Day at Grandmother's

OTHER was buttoning the last button on Mary Katherine's blue calico dress when the wheels stopped at the gate. Without even waiting to have her hair ribbon straightened, Mary Katherine ran to the window.

"It's Grandfather!" she cried, and was off down stairs.

As she threw open the front door, her grandfather waved his hand and called, "Do you know of any one who might want to go to the country to-day?"

"Oh, goody! Did you come for me?" and she ran back into the house.

In a very few minutes she was seated in the buggy with her nightgown in a neatly-tied package on her knee,--for when she went to grandmother's she always stayed over night. As the old horse started, Mary Katherine looked up into

her grandfather's face with a satisfied smile and settled herself for the drive. Grandfather seemed almost as pleased as Mary Katherine, and his kindly old face beamed as he returned the child's smile.

He chuckled as he said, "Grandmother has a surprise for you this morning, little girl."

"Really! What? Did she bake cookies?"

"No."

"Make my doll a new dress?"

"No."

"Are there kittens?"

"No."

"Pups?"

"I'm afraid if you keep on in the way you have begun you will never guess. You had better wait until you see Grandmother."

"We'll never get there and I don't see how I can wait." Mary Katherine sighed and gazed unseeingly at a field full of beautiful daisies and yarrow.

After several minutes' silence, Mary Katherine addressed her grandfather again. "Mother told me not to wade in the brook--she says it's dog days and I mustn't

go in the water. It wouldn't hurt me, would it?"

Grandfather never refused Mary Katherine anything, but as this was her mother's order all he could say was, "Of course Mother knows best."

Just then they came in sight of a small grove of pine and chestnut trees, and in the centre of the grove, almost hidden from view, was a little brown house. And was it--? Yes! There was Grandmother on the porch! Mary Katherine waved her handkerchief as they turned into the gate and when the buggy stopped before the door, she jumped out into Grandmother's arms. And there was Uncle Dick, too! He had come to take the horse to the stable, for Grandfather was a cripple and could not attend to such matters himself.

"Grandfather said you had a surprise for me," Mary Katherine announced, "and it wasn't cookies, dolls, pups or kittens. Is it pigs?"

"A goose,"--this from Uncle Dick.

"Dick!" remonstrated Grandmother, and Uncle Dick laughed.

"Oh! When did you get it? Where is it?"

“‘It’ is in the kitchen. May she see it now, Mother?”

But Mary Katherine did not wait for consent,--she was off for the back door. In a minute there came a shout of joy from the direction in which the child had disappeared and the trio at the front of the house smiled as they heard it. Mary Katherine soon appeared, arm in arm with a little girl about her own age, both were smiling broadly and the smile burst into a giggle as Mary Katherine asked, “Did you mean Louisa May when you said that about the goose, Uncle Dick?”

Uncle Dick only laughed, as he jumped into the buggy and gathered up the lines. Both children ran forward and cried in a chorus, “Won’t you let us ride to the barn with you?”

Grandfather lifted them to the seat beside Uncle Dick and with a “Do be careful” from Grandmother, they were off.

“Louisa May, when did you come? Did Uncle Dick bring you out this morning?”

“Yes. Your grandmother sent word to Mother last night. She wanted to surprise you and she knew you’d like me better

than anything else--because I'm your best friend, you know."

"Of course," and both girls smiled contentedly. When they reached the barn, they first watched Uncle Dick unhitch, and then they were off to see the horses and cows. After they had seen all their friends down stairs they ran up the steps to the second floor, which opened into a higher part of the barn-yard. Here were a lot of old wagons and carriages, but Mary Katherine and Louisa May were especially attracted by an old covered buggy, into which they climbed. And--Oh! What exciting times they did have! They went to picnics and driving parties until they grew tired of such amusements and then they drove in mad haste through great forests, trying to get away from some wild beast or to escape a pursuing tribe of gipsies.

But after the last wild drive they decided that such excitement was too hard on their nerves and Louisa May suggested that they go up into the haymow and jump,--which they immediately did. When the dinner bell sounded, two very hungry little girls crawled down to the barn floor and made their way toward the house.

After dinner Mary Katherine and Louisa May decided they would like to spend the afternoon at the brook. With a little coaxing they gained Grandmother's consent, on condition that they would be very careful and would not go into the water. So when they had helped feed the dog and cat and visited the pigs and chickens, they set off for the water.

As the girls approached the little dam near which they usually played, they were delighted to see three small boys from a neighboring farm. The boys were trying to sail a float of their own manufacture and when they spied the two girls coming through the lane, one of them shouted,

"Hello, there! Have you come to wade?"

Mary Katherine looked at Louisa May and Louisa May looked at Mary Katherine.

"Our mothers don't allow us to wade," they chorused.

"Ah! Come on! It won't hurt you any."

But the two girls shook their heads sadly. It would never do to disobey deliberately. However they agreed to stand

on the shore and hold a rope which the boys attached to the float--just so they wouldn't "feel that they was clear out of it."

At first they stood well back from the water, but as they became more excited over the pursuit of a fleet of pirates, they drew closer and closer to the edge of the brook, and finally stepped out on two old boards that were partly on solid ground and partly in the water. And then--Oh, my! The oarsmen of the ship took an unusually long stroke and sent the float beyond the length of the rope. There was a splash, a scream,--and two very wet little girls stepped out of the water and looked at each other in dismay.

"I 'spose," said Mary Katherine, "since we are so wet we might as well wade a little before we go home."

"Yes, I 'spose we might," replied Louisa May, and before you could say "Jack Robinson" two very wet pairs of shoes and stockings were on the shore and two very guilty little girls were wading in the brook.

At last it was time to go home, and the two girls picked up their shoes and stock-

ings and started through the lane. But for some reason their minds were not quite comfortable.

"Maybe we shouldn't have gone in." mused Mary Katherine.

"Yes, maybe we shouldn't have gone in."

And they went on in silence. Grandmother was standing in the kitchen door, and as they approached she looked at their bedraggled clothes in amazement.

"Why, my dear little girls!" she exclaimed, "What happened to you?" And then she sat down in the door step with a dripping figure on each side and heard the whole story. There were a few tears shed, and after the story had been told, Mary Katherine drew very near to Grandmother and, putting her little fat arms around the old woman's neck, she whispered, "I'm terribly sorry, Granny dear."

And Grandmother didn't scold. She just kissed them both and then told them stories until smiles began to show on the tear-stained faces.

"But dear me!" And Grandmother jumped up and started into the house, "I almost forgot that you are likely to take

your death of cold! Come right into the kitchen and dry your clothes."

"I'm afraid we can't wear these muddy dresses to supper," Louisa May said as she came into the kitchen.

"No, I'm afraid not," and Mary Katherine looked dejectedly at the mud-stained dresses.

"How would it be," suggested Grandmother, "if you should go up-stairs, take a warm bath and jump right into bed? You can pretend that you are ill and I will bring your supper up to you. When Grandfather goes to town this evening, he can bring you clean dresses for morning."

This idea highly delighted Mary Katherine and Louisa May and they ran up-stairs Grandmother following to help them undress.

When they had finished their supper, Grandmother asked how they would like to amuse themselves until bedtime. Would they like her to play checkers with them or should she read to them?

But Mary Katherine sighed and shook her head. "I'm so sleepy," she said, "and when I've been naughty, I like to get to sleep before the whippoor-will sings."

"Yes," agreed Louisa May, "Let's get to sleep before the whippoor-will sings."

And so Grandmother kissed them both good night, and went down-stairs to finish her evening work.

Marion H. Blood.



In the Whirlpool



CHARLES had been told not to go near the bridge when he was in swimming, but Charles, like most six-year-old boys, preferred to do as he wished rather than as his mother wished him to do. He had been warned of the danger there on account of a whirlpool, and his father had put a rope across the stream to mark the dangerous spot. Charles had never ventured near the rope, and so his nurse had ceased to watch him very closely. One day, therefore, she sat down in the shade of a tree to read, leaving Charles to himself.

The water looked very tempting near the bridge. "It can't hurt to try it for just a minute," thought Charles, as he lay on the bank in the warm summer sun. Besides, such big boys as he knew how to swim.

Charles slipped under the rope, paddled on a short distance, and then----! He was being whirled around and around, all the while moving downward with lightning rapidity. Suddenly he stopped with a dreadful thud to find himself in a strange land full of queer, fishlike women, whose long black hair hung around their sad faces. Charles watched them for some time, as they swam to and fro, combing their hair or smoothing their ruffled scales and fins. But he was not able to reach them or to call for help, so he lay there, waiting. Presently he heard laughing and a great splashing of water as the strange creatures hurried toward him.

“Pooh!” one of them cried, “it is only a boy.”

Another looked at him scornfully and then turned away, splashing a great deal of water into his eyes with her tail. They went a little way from him and talked very loudly together.

“To think that it wasn’t a man,” one muttered. “I am sure that I should have won him,” and she smiled at herself in the water mirror.

Now Charles had read about mermaids,

but he had never supposed they were like this. So they had been banished from the earth because of their ill natures and their uncongenial manners, to remain under water until some heroic man might be persuaded to release them!

Finally the mermaids returned to start Charles on his journey; and how they laughed as they watched him tossing about in the whirlpool!

A second thud was felt and a second time Charles stopped in a strange land. This time, however, it was a beautiful city whose streets were paved with coral and whose houses were of pearls. The people here seemed gay and happy and very much like mortals. No sight had ever seemed so beautiful to Charles, and he began to wish that he might stay there always.

He heard music, the sweetest music imaginable, to which all the gayly-dressed people marched in his direction. The leader of the procession dismounted from his handsome sea-horse and advanced towards Charles with arms outstretched.

"Welcome to Water City!" he cried, and lifted Charles to a small sea-horse which stood beside his huge one. The pro-

cession then filed back into the city and finally into a large hall where gorgeously-dressed women awaited their coming.

Could it be?-- Yes, on the throne sat a "really truly king," and beside him a queen! Charles was dazzled by the beauty of it all, and could only blink his eyes in wonderment as the lovely court ladies came to look at him.

But when the questioning began, all was different.

"How did you get here?" and, "What route did you take?" were the first inquiries.

Charles was dazed; he did not understand, and his lip began to tremble a very little. But it would never do to cry before a king.

"I was drowned," he managed to say ever so softly, but some of the people heard it and laughed.

"And how did it happen?" the king asked kindly, as he slipped a pearl necklace over Charles' head. But the splendor had ceased to appeal to Charles and, forgetting everything but his own troubles, he gave way to tears. Amazement and dismay were written on the faces of the

courtiers. No one had been known to cry in Water City; there all was happiness and joy. Mortals surely must be different.

"Mamma," Charles kept saying between sobs; and then everyone guessed his secret.

The king did not repeat his question, but only said, "He cannot stay in Water City. Disobedience is a great sin." So, after giving up his necklace, Charles went a third time through the whirlpool.

Bruised and scratched, he found himself at last in a horrible place,--a den of sea-serpents full of small fishes and serpents who were ruled by the Great Monster.

The Monster, whose huge eyes seemed starting from his head, made a hissing noise as he swam over Charles, tearing with his tail the tender skin of the boy's face. Then slimy fishes and small, slippery tadpoles crawled all over him, and minute frogs stuck in his hair. But Charles was unable to lift his bruised arms and push any of them away.

The tiny creatures disappeared as the Monster, with a great splashing of water, swept under Charles and hurled him many feet away; then, as he waited for him to fall, took great pleasure in glaring at the

sufferings of his victim. Charles did fall; but the heavy thud caused the slide on which he had been resting to give way with a loud crash, sending him once more into the whirlpool.

Charles knew nothing for sometime, but when at last he regained consciousness, he found that he was in Fairyland. Here the little people hurried about, seemingly very busy. Six very small and queerly-dressed men came towards Charles, and, lifting him high above their heads, skipped back to the city with him. Again Charles was taken before a king who asked him how he came there and if he had been sent for punishment. Alas! he had disobeyed, or he would never have reached this strange land. Charles told the whole story, from his slipping under the rope to his arrival in Fairyland.

The king decreed that his punishment should be to tend the sea-cattle in the fields for twenty years, at the end of which time, if none were missing, he would be given a position of honor in Fairyland. The king ended by saying, "Pray to our sea-god and nymph each night, and they may help you."

The task which had been given Charles was a hard one, as the sea-cows were very much afraid of the mortal. Each night when he returned from the fields, he cried himself to sleep because one or two cows were missing. The king sent word that all cows lost would add years to his penance, and that the loss of the cow with the golden bell would cost him his life. So Charles worked hard to see that all of them were brought home at night.

One day the cow with the gold bell waded into a stream of water and refused to move. Having exhausted his supply of stones, Charles plunged into the water after her, and suddenly began to sink. Faster and faster he whirled; then finally stopped with a very hard bump.

Charles raised himself on his elbows and rubbed his eyes. Yes, he was still lying on the banks near the bridge; and his slipping under the rope had been only a dream. How glad he was that he had not disobeyed!

Ruth Rodgers.

The Queen's First Red Rose



ONE time long ago in Fairy-land, all the fairies came together to celebrate the birthday of the Queen. Such gay little fairies they were, dressed in the petals and leaves of the flowers, and driving their chariots drawn by dragon-flies, or prancing by on their steeds, the lady-bugs.

In the palace, the Queen stood waiting to receive her subjects, clad in the soft, fragrant petals of the rose. Over this garment was draped a filmy cobweb that the industrious spiders had spun upon the grass to catch the dewdrops that now sparkled in her crown.

But the Queen was not happy, although she had such loving subjects and such a beautiful palace. She was longing for a

new dress. It was the custom for the Queens of Fairyland to dress in the petals of the rose, and although her subjects had searched far and near for a red rose, they had found only white ones,--and she had grown so tired of white dresses!

Among the Queen's pages was little Flyaway, whom she loved dearly, and whom she had dressed in the leaves of the rose to mark him as her special attendant. Little Flyaway heard her complaining of her dress and felt very sorry, for when she was sad, he was sad, too. So he wandered out into the forest, away from the other pages and the maids, who were watching two caterpillars race, and sat down to think how he might make the Queen merry again. "Oh, if only I might bring her a red rose before night!" he sighed.

"So, little Flyaway, that is what you are so sorrowful about!" said a soft voice behind him, and he turned to see the Fairy Godmother, who always helps the fairies when they are in trouble.

"Yes," he said. "Why do not red roses grow in our kingdom, Fairy Godmother?"

"Listen, little Flyaway," said she. "Beyond the edge of this forest lies the king-

dom of the rosebugs. The King of the Rosebugs hates your Queen and for very spite will allow only white roses to grow in her kingdom. As soon as a red rosebush springs up, he leads his army against it and destroys it.

"There is a legend in Fairyland that if anyone is brave enough to venture into the domain of this king and kill him, red roses will spring up in Fairyland after a rose has been dipped in the King's blood. But alas! no one is brave enough to venture."

"I will go!" cried Flyaway, springing up.

"You, little Flyaway!" answered the Fairy Godmother in amazement. "Oh no! The King is great and strong--he would kill you!"

"I care not if he kills me," said Flyaway. "But I will battle with him," adding softly,--"for the love of my queen."

Then the Fairy Godmother said nothing, for she saw that Flyaway was determined to go, but led him deeper into the forest and gave him the top of an acorn for shield, and a pine needle for spear. She told him the way through the forest and

then bade him farewell very sorrowfully, for she felt sure she would never see little Flyaway again.

Flyaway trudged on through the forest according to the directions of the Fairy Godmother and after a long while reached the edge of the forest, where he saw the King with all his subjects around him, holding his court under a rosebush. Flyaway advanced towards the King, who, when he saw him coming, called out with a mighty voice, "Who are you?"

"I am Flyaway, page of the Queen of the Fairies," cried Flyaway, "and I have come to kill you."

Then the King and his subjects laughed; but this only angered Flyaway the more. So he shook his spear at the King and cried, "Come on, coward!" At this, the King buckled on his dazzling golden armor over his robes of brown, and came out to meet Flyaway.

The wondering subjects thought to see the King cut down his little opponent at the first blow, but as Flyaway was very quick in dodging the King's weapon, the battle was not over quite so quickly as the subjects had expected. Soon Flyaway grew

very tired, and the King hit him so hard that the blood began to flow; but the brave page remembered his queen and fought on. Finally, the King slipped, and Flyaway quickly pierced him through the heart with his sword.

When the rosebugs saw that their king was dead, they were greatly frightened and fell down at Flyaway's feet, begging for mercy. He told them he would spare their lives if they would promise never to molest the roses again. Then he cut a bud from the rosebush, dipped it in the King's blood and set out for Fairyland.

In the evening, just as the fireflies were lighting up the banquet hall, he came to the palace, and, laying the rose at his queen's feet, told her how he had slain the King of the Rosebugs and brought the first red rose of Fairyland to her. Then the Queen made him lead the ball with her. Moreover, she commanded that as a memorial of his devotion to her, some of the red roses be draped with the green of his suit. So, whenever you see the moss rosebuds, you must remember little Flyaway, the Fairy.

Harriet C. Scott.

Why the Bell-Flowers Hang Their Heads



THOUSAND years ago in the land of the fairies, there was a very sad occurrence which made those little people sorrowful for many days. This event affected particularly the race of fairies which lived in bell-like flowers, such as the hyacinth, columbine, blue-bell and lily-of-the-valley.

Near a large lily-of-the-valley bed, the favorite haunt of Liliput, one of the fairies, there was a small cottage in which lived a little girl. Her father and mother were dead and her only companions were a dog and cat, who were both devoted to Cynthia, their mistress. Being exceedingly jealous of her love, moreover, these pets were always quarreling.

Cynthia was a pretty little girl, with black hair and eyes and very red cheeks;

but she was not very good. Not that she was particularly bad, either, except that she did mischievous things to annoy people, her pets, and even the few fairies who had made themselves known to her. One of the latter was Liliput, a wee fairy many years old, with a wizened-up face and skin like a walnut shell, dry and wrinkled and brown. Although not liking Cynthia's teasing ways, Liliput felt sorry for the lonely girl and often talked with her.

One morning when Cynthia was walking in the meadow near her house with her dog, Trip, and her cat, Trap, she began to tease them by telling each the things she liked most about the other. They stood it at first with much patience, but finally, when Cynthia told Trip that his tail was much longer and bushier than Trap's, the cat, who was very proud of her tail, flew upon Trip and began to claw him. Then and there ensued a fight that was memorable in the lives of Cynthia, of Trip, and of Trap. Cynthia was greatly frightened and was beginning to fear for the lives of both her pets, when suddenly Liliput jumped from a lily-of-the-valley and appeared on the scene of action.

"This strife must cease!" he cried with all his might. "I forbid it."

His loud voice, coming from the ground, apparently--for Liliput was so tiny--frightened Trip and Trap away from each other. Then Liliput, climbing upon a boulder so as to be better seen, demanded what was the trouble. After an interval, for all three of them tried to talk at once, he succeeded in getting a clear account of the fray. Finally, after considering the question carefully, Liliput decided that Trap was in the wrong. Much to Cynthia's sorrow, he decreed that Trap should be turned into a beetle, not knowing that the beetle was the one invincible enemy of his own race.

Cynthia and Trip returned home, both feeling mournful. In the afternoon, Cynthia, with her dog, went out to gather some lilies-of-the-valley. To her horror, she saw that they were all uprooted. Looking about her to discover the cause, she perceived Liliput and the beetle near the brook that ran by her cottage, having a wordy conflict. She watched them, and soon could tell that Liliput was getting the worst of it. The beetle was threatening

to pull up all the bell-flowers he saw, and the two enemies were becoming more angry each moment. Finally they came to blows, and the beetle was pushing Liliput nearer and nearer the water, when Cynthia intervened, and with one stroke of her finger turned the beetle over on his back. This she thought would make him powerless; but no sooner had his back touched the ground, than the beetle was transformed, and a roaring, howling tiger appeared before her as if by magic. But it was not wonderful, since in the beginning the beetle had been a cat, and the tiger, you know, is only a very fierce cat. Stricken with horror, Cynthia, Trip and Liliput stood rooted to the spot. With a terrific roar, the tiger rushed upon them and devoured them all one after the other; then--fell dead.

All Fairyland wept over the untimely death of little Liliput, and even their much-loved bell-flowers bowed their heads in sympathy. That is the reason why the bells of the columbine, lily-of-the-valley, hyacinth and blue-bell always droop, instead of lifting their faces to the sun.

Mary King Mellon.

The Prince's Task



HIGH on a hill which overlooked the country for miles around, stood the castle of good King Fritz and of Queen Louisa. High walls and towers guard it on all sides from attack, and within these walls in a beautiful garden played the little princesses. They were dear little girls and loved each other much more than ordinary little girls love their sisters. Yet, although these princesses were as happy as birds, they had one wish which had never been breathed to their father and mother. They wanted a little brother.

One day there seemed to be great excitement in the castle, and the little girls in the garden sent their nurse in to find out the cause. The nurse came back out of breath, and cried :

“O my Princesses, my Princesses, you have a little brother!”

Little Princess Katrina and Princess Gracia were so pleased that they sang all the rest of the day, and it was with difficulty that their nurse persuaded them to go to bed that night. All was not so happy, however, at the castle. The news had at once been sent out through the kingdom that a prince had been born; but one item of information had been withheld--the poor little prince had hands like cats' paws. The court physicians were consulted, but could do nothing. One suggested that the paws be cut off and little cork hands be substituted; but the Queen would not listen to this, and the Prince's hands were left as they were.

The Prince grew fast, and his bright blue eyes, yellow hair, and fair skin, added to his charming manners and happy, smiling face, made him the pet of the few who were permitted to see him. His tutors were the best to be had in the land, and yet so bright and intelligent was he that at the age of ten he could be taught no more. Although he was known by no one except his special servants and a few chosen friends of the royal family, he knew of all who came to court.

One day a strange-looking old woman appeared before the gates and demanded to be admitted. She called herself the "Solver of Mysteries," and asked to be taken before the Prince. The courtier whom she addressed was surprised--for few knew a prince still lived--and paid no attention to her. The Solver of Mysteries, as we shall call her, was about to repeat her question when a servant came up to her and said, "Wilt follow me?" Then in a whisper, "The Prince Rudolph would speak with you."

Let us, too, follow the servant and the Solver of Mysteries.

She was taken into an immense garden, filled with flowers, among which fountains here and there shot forth cooling streams of water. Here in a shady summer-house sat the Prince. As soon as the old woman saw him, her face cleared, and, hastening up to him as fast as her rheumatic limbs would bear her, she asked in a trembling voice:--

"Rudolph, my prince, is it you in very truth? They told me you were dead."

"Yes," answered the Prince, "I know it

has been so reported throughout the kingdom of Lotharia."

The old woman then asked him question after question regarding himself. Having learned all she could, or all she wanted to know, she suddenly bowed to the Prince and, turning to the servant, said, "Fellow, I am ready to go." The Prince was troubled. He started up as if to call her back, but changing his mind, sank upon his couch.

From this time on, no one saw a smile upon the prince's face. His only solace seemed to be in going over the questions the old woman had asked, in order to see if he could not find a clue to the mystery of her appearance. No more were his sisters welcome companions. The Queen became very anxious about her son, and had the kingdom searched for the old woman; but the latter could neither be found nor heard of.

Five years afterwards, the Solver of Mysteries again appeared at the castle and asked for the Prince. This time she was admitted at once. When led into the presence of the Prince, she said:--

"Rudolph, my Prince, rememberest thou me?"

"Yes, Solver of Mysteries," said he, "But why is it your questions have so troubled me since you were here?"

A queer expression came into the old woman's face, and, trembling, she began to speak in a low, droning voice.

"Fifty years ago when I was but a child, I was in a dark wood one day when a fairy with golden hair and gauzy wings appeared to me. 'Fear not, little girl,' said she, 'I am come to reveal your fate to you. From this day forth you must search the earth until you find a prince with hands like cats' paws, and a princess with cats' ears. You must bring them together; for unless these two meet they will never have human hands and ears.' She disappeared, and although I was then only twelve years of age, I immediately began my search. But not until five years ago did my prophetic instinct tell me I had found you, my Prince. Since then I have been searching for the Princess, and I am come now to lead you to her."

At intervals during this speech, the old woman had been seized with such violent

trembling that she could scarcely speak. Another attack now came upon her, and when its fury had spent itself, she fell back--dead. All were frightened; not so much by what she had revealed, as by the tragic end of her story. Most of all did the Prince feel awe.

They buried the old woman in the garden where she had died. Then the Prince, who was now almost twenty-one, decided to set out on his search with only one companion. He must find the Princess, since the old woman could not now lead him to her. He traveled up and down the land until his nickname, the Searcher, became so well known that many, not knowing he was a prince, kicked him from their doors. At last his search was rewarded, and in the kingdom of Arbethia, in a castle on a high peninsula, he found the Princess. Having been told of the Prince by the old woman, she had been watching for him for fourteen years. Everything was as the old woman had said; yet she had not foretold all that the meeting would mean to each.

The Prince remained in the castle for a year, and, having at the end of that time received the Princess's promise that she

would be his bride, he started back to his home. There he found affairs in a sad state. His father, the King, had died during his absence, and, as there was no known prince to take his place, the chief nobles had assumed control. The Prince having established peace and happiness in the kingdom, returned to claim his bride.

Both lived to a happy old age; their sickness tended by tender nurses and their death mourned by loyal subjects. This story and the remembrance of their reign is yet a favorite topic of conversation among the people of Lotharia.

Mary C. Brinton.

The Kingdom of Arachnea



It was a sultry afternoon, and in despair I sought the garret with my books. Ensconced in a wide airy window, I endeavored in vain to collect my thoughts. I noticed a spider swinging back and forth in the breeze. ““Won’t you come into my parlor?” said the spider to the fly,” I sang gaily. Was it frightened? Quick as a flash it went up the silken rope to its web, and disappeared into the hole behind.

“Won’t you come into *my* parlor?”

I started and looked around, but could see no one. The question was repeated--and there, dangling at the end of a long silken rope, was a huge spider looking straight at me. Immediately, an intense desire seized me to enter that black hole behind the web. On my acceptance of the invitation the spider disappeared, but soon

a chair-like object was lowered for me. Slowly and steadily I was raised to regions as yet unexplored.

What a surprise awaited me! Instead of entering a dark hole, I was taken through the gates of a beautiful garden. Far in the distance was a magnificent white building, the like of which I had never seen. My attention was naturally attracted to the spider who had invited me. I saw that he was really handsome, as spiders go, and that he seemed to be a dignitary, for all paid him homage.

"I shall place my kingdom at your disposal for a time," he said, thus answering the question that had formed in my mind. "I am very glad of this opportunity of showing a mortal the true side of a spider's life. Welcome to the kingdom of Arachnea!"

I expressed my very great gratitude and spoke of my admiration for spiders. "For that, you are having your reward," the king replied. He consulted for a moment with his attendants and then expressed his sorrow at not being able to accompany me; an affair of state required his attention.

In the kingdom of Arachnea the fly is

the food, the slave and the beast of burden. Everywhere, flies were seen working under their cruel task-masters. We were drawn through the gardens by a pair of blue-bottle flies hitched to an odd little carriage. Everywhere, transient yet strangely beautiful flowers were growing. As we neared the palace, I halted the carriage, desiring to see something of the kingdom. Not far from the palace were huge domes of white silken appearance. These were the royal incubators. I learned that after the descendants of the blood royal left these early homes, they were taken to the schools and seminaries (which I did not care to visit) at the western side of the kingdom. All the buildings were of the same creamy-white silken material.

The town just outside the gates was excellently laid out. Here was no slum district. Everyone seemed prosperous and happy, the better class living apart from the others. The merchants had their stores, built entirely underground, in a quarter of their own. Most remarkable of all the buildings in this odd town, were the jail and the warehouses. The jail, constructed of heavy silken ropes many times strength-

ened, sheltered as vicious a looking lot of criminals as one would care to see at liberty. The warehouses, separated from the jail by a narrow alley, were full of flies,--living, dead, and in every state of preparation for food.

Just as we were leaving the warehouses, the King rode up on a magnificent blue-bottle fly, and invited me to come to the palace to witness a trial there. We entered by broad white steps, and were taken into a wide hall hung with beautiful drapery, some of which I was told had been taken from Noah's Ark. The court room was just back of this hall. What a spectacle there met my eyes! Never before had I seen such coloring as the robes of the judges presented. The prisoner was a meek-looking spider on trial for the attempted assassination of the King. The presiding judge rose to speak--

"For gracious sake, here she is--fast asleep!"

A hand, laid on my shoulder, brought me back to my books.

Jean Gray Brinton.

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